



Creating Standards-Based Units

Why go this route?

- Because standards reflect the knowledge, understanding, and skills valued most by experts in the disciplines they represent.
- Because a focus on explicit standards enlivens classrooms by inspiring creativity and promoting inquiry.
- Because standards-based units of study are designed to ensure that every student can learn at high levels.

You'll know you've arrived when...

- Standards are tied into the curriculum.
- Student achievement data is used to determine which standards need mastery.
- Grade-level teams plan standards-based units together.
- Standards identified for a unit are assessed explicitly.
- Student achievement is tracked by standard mastered, rather than by assignments.
- Student achievement data follows the student from teacher to teacher.
- Unit plans are communicated to parents, students and school staff.

Construction Zone

- Plan to have district curriculum specialists on hand for your unit-writing workshop.
- Have current student achievement data available for staff review at the workshop.
- Have copies of the standards available.



It's about TIME

- Devote one or more full professional development days for the standards-based Unit-writing Workshop.
- Designate another 1-2 grade-level meetings to finish writing the individual lessons for the unit.




Potential COSTS

- Copying of workshop materials

The Process

*A step-by-step guide
to creating instructional
units built around standards-
based expectations*

NOTE: Steps marked with a  are accompanied by one or more inserts, included in this packet.

1 Review school achievement data in preparation for building a unit that addresses gaps in achievement. Give each teacher his/her standards in either hard or electronic copy.

Ask them to identify the standards that students in their grade mastered, based on their most current achievement data. The MI-Map disk and website contain ELA and Mathematics standards.

2 Publish the results. Create a Standards Bulletin in newsletter format (using a desktop publishing tool) or create a Standards Bulletin Board to post conclusions.

INSERT for Step 2 is a worksheet that grade-level teams could use to analyze their students' achievement data.

3 Plan a school-wide standards-based unit writing professional development day. The day's goal is for each grade-level to complete a draft of a standards-based unit that can be taught during the current school year.

Have district curriculum directors on hand to help facilitate the sessions and answer questions from the staff. Repeat the process annually to accumulate a collection of standards-based units for your school, built around real achievement needs.

INSERT for Step 3 serves as a prototype agenda for your day. INSERTS 3A–3I are included to support each agenda item. (Lesson-writing can begin, but won't be finished).

Choose from the standards you identified as needing mastery. Refer back to Step 2.

- A. Write an "AIM" for the unit.
- B. Connect the unit to students' lives.
- C. Write "Essential Questions" for inquiry and exploration.
- D. Plan for formative assessments to suggest course corrections.
- E. Write lessons.
- F. Plan authentic instruction.
- G. Write performance goals.
- H. Communicate criteria for success to students.
- I. Design a reflective process for teachers and students.

4 Make grade-level time for finishing lesson-writing.

5 Agree on schedules for when each unit will be taught.

6 Record standards-based student performance in a common format that can be passed on from teacher to teacher. Insert for Step 6 is available on the MI-Map disk or website.

See MI-Map Packet 6:1 "Planning Your Moves Toward Standards" for MI-Map's suggested Excel-based tracking system or adapt and develop your own.

7 Let everyone know about your standards-based unit project. Educate parents and students about the importance of standards with a "Hooray for Standards" kick-off event before beginning to teach a unit.

Err on the side of too much information. Tell parents, other teachers, and building administrators your plans, of course, but then keep going to include bus-drivers, food-service people, secretaries, and volunteers as well. Have fun "advertising" the learning coming up!

Getting more mileage from creating standards-based units

Developing units focused on specific standards benefits your school in regard to the following initiatives:

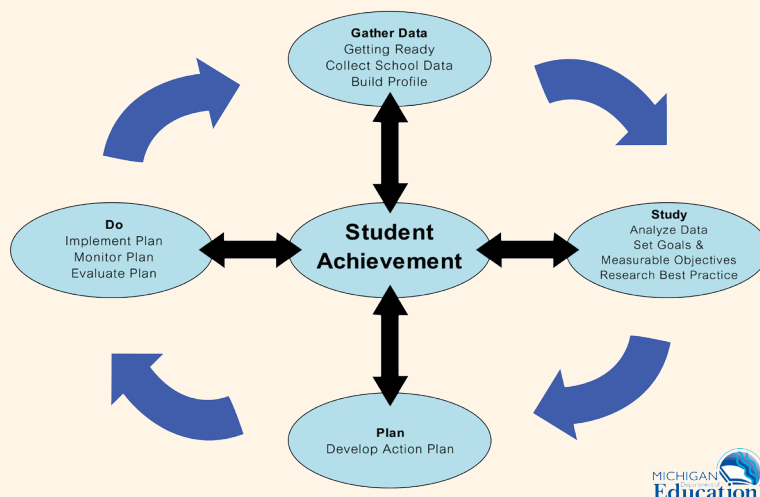
Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

- ESEA uses Michigan's state assessment scores as its measure of student achievement. Aligning your curriculum with the Michigan's standards (upon which the assessment is based) is a first step to being sure students are working on the things they'll be assessed on.

State Accreditation System

- Michigan's school report cards use state assessment scores as one of their measures of school performance. Aligning curriculum—lessons and units—to the standards gives students the best chance to excel on that measure.

Michigan Continuous School Improvement Process (Mi-CSI) Michigan School Improvement Framework



This packet will assist schools as they work on Strand I, Teaching for Learning. It provides schools a process to ensure that their curriculum is aligned to the state standards.



Resources

Books, Articles, Websites

Concept-based Curriculum and Instruction Teaching Beyond the Facts

Lynn H. Erickson. Thousand Oaks, CA:
Corwin Press, 2002.

A good blend of theory, explanation
and illustrative practice. Helps think
about a discipline like an expert
would, and teach students to do
the same.

Succeeding with Standards: Linking Curriculum, Assessment, and Action Planning

Douglas Harris, Judy Carr. Alexandria,
VA: ASCD, 1996.

These are experienced educators who
offer lots of practical examples of how
to coordinate standards (and topics,
products, performances and rubrics)
with existing curricula and detailed
action plans to help you stay on track.

Understanding by Design, Expanded 2nd Edition

McTighe, Jay and Wiggins, Grant. Alex-
andria, VA: ASCD, 2005.

M.O.R.E. Portal

Michigan Online
Resources for Educators.

<http://more.mel.org/>.

Locate lesson plans and curriculum
aids that are searchable by subject
or state standard.

The Teaching for Learning Framework

<http://www.teachingforlearning.org/>

The Teaching for Learning Framework,
a project of the Michigan Department
of Education – Office of Education
Improvement and Innovation, was
created to support effective instruction
in challenging content across all grade
levels and content areas.

Michigan LearnPort

<http://www.learnport.org>

Michigan LearnPort provides online
learning solutions for educators:
Access high-quality online courses
and resources, meet professional
development requirements, earn
SB-CEUs and more.

People

Intermediate School Districts/RESAs
can serve as a resource.

For more information, contact:

Michigan Department of Education

Office of Education
Improvement and Innovation
517-241-3147

School Improvement Unit
517-373-8480

Curriculum and Instruction Unit
517-241-4285

Office of Assessment
and Accountability
517-373-0048

Office of Early Childhood
and Family Services
517-241-3592

Office of Field Services
517-373-3921

Office of Professional Preparation
and Teacher Certification
517-373-6505

Office of Special Education
and Early Intervention Services
517-373-9433

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